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ABSTRACT

This mini-guide helps students understand moral concepts and values so that they can better evaluate their own behavior. It also helps them to recognize what may happen when they act in a certain way. The guide begins with an exercise in which the student matches words that describe good values and their opposites. The next exercise calls for the student to use a word from the previous exercise to describe what may result from a certain action. This exercise focuses on the determination of values based on pleasure vs. pain. Next, the value words are used to describe the short and long range consequences of specific actions. The following page contains several actions for which the student must write a sentence describing why the actions would be rewarded or punished. Three lists containing actions, values, and feelings are then to be matched according to how the student feels they are related. This exercise focuses particularly on the concept of justice. Next, several situations are listed for which the student decides what value judgments he/she should make in each situation, followed by space to list the ten values that are most important to him/her. Finally, several value statements are listed for which the student must state his/her agreement or disagreement. (RC)

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A MINI-GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

ON SETTING VALUES

by

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A Guide for:

Evaluating personal behavior
Developing moral concepts
Improving self-discipline

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Moral or good behavior is encouraged and rewarded in our society. Yet, acting in an ethical or moral way must come from within the individual person. The only way others can tell if we are moral or good is whether we act moral or good. Even though many moral questions are very difficult to answer, there are many basic values in our society with which most everyone can agree.

This guide was designed to help you understand moral concepts and values so that you can better evaluate your own behavior. Since most of our actions have some kind of results or consequences, the guide is also designed to help you recognize what may happen when you act in a certain way.

Words of Value

Instructions:

As a beginning to our exploring values, we will see that many words in our language describe "good" or "bad". Match the two words in the lists below that describe a good value with its opposite.

What our society holds to be good.	What our society holds to be bad.
_____ truth	a. laziness
_____ life	b. pain
_____ justice	c. prejudice
_____ love	d. exposure
_____ order	e. danger
_____ freedom	f. sadness
_____ beauty	g. over-dependency
_____ richness	h. sickness
_____ happiness	i. hate
_____ self-sufficiency	j. bondage
_____ meaningfulness	k. death
_____ safety	l. injustice
_____ shelter	m. ugliness
_____ productivity	n. falseness
_____ health	o. meaninglessness
_____ painlessness	p. poverty
_____ fairness	q. anarchy
_____ approval	r. impatience
_____ peace	s. anxiety
_____ kindness	t. disapproval
_____ gentleness	u. brutality
_____ patience	v. unkindness
_____ knowledge	x. ignorance

Pleasure and Pain

Instructions:

Many of the values in our society are based on what gives people pleasure or pain. We act in many situations one way or the other simply because it gives us pleasure or because we are avoiding pain. Using the words on the previous page or in your own words, fill in the word which best describes what may result from the action described.

Action	Immediate Results
1. Putting your hand on a hot stove	_____
2. Playing with a loaded gun	_____
3. Taking medicine for a cold	_____
4. Getting out of the rain	_____
5. Working hard on a job	_____
6. Getting a bad tooth fixed	_____
7. Doing something kind for a friend	_____
8. Keeping out of the street	_____
9. Making a good grade	_____
10. Eating	_____
11. Sleeping	_____
12. Fighting	_____
13. Getting hit with a rock	_____
14. Receiving a gift	_____
15. Staying out in cold weather	_____
Think of Others	
16. _____	_____
17. _____	_____
18. _____	_____
19. _____	_____
20. _____	_____

Note: Sometimes we find rules in our society which protect people from pain or harm. Do you think any of the above actions have resulted in rules?

Long—Range Consequences

Instructions:

The exercise on the previous page may have seemed a little silly, but it will help us to think about more complex values. Many values in our society are based not only on the short-range but also on the long-range results or consequences of our actions. In other words, some things may be pleasant at first but painful later on and vice versa. Fill in the words which best describe what you think will be the short and then the long results or consequences of the following actions.

Actions	Short	Long
1. Going to the dentist	_____	_____
2. Driving a car too fast	_____	_____
3. Stealing someone's tape recorder	_____	_____
4. Taking illegal drugs	_____	_____
5. Making fun of someone	_____	_____
6. Working hard on a job	_____	_____
7. Getting drunk	_____	_____
8. Taking medicine when sick	_____	_____
9. Practising for a football game	_____	_____
10. Practicing a musical instrument	_____	_____
Think of Others		
11. _____	_____	_____
12. _____	_____	_____
13. _____	_____	_____
14. _____	_____	_____
15. _____	_____	_____

Rewards and Punishment

Instructions:

The next step in exploring values is to recognize that people do things in order to obtain rewards or to avoid punishment. Government, religion, clubs, schools, friends, and other democratic groups will reward or approve good behavior and will punish or disapprove bad behavior. Listed below are several kinds of actions. Fill in the blank with a sentence describing why you think the actions would be approved or disapproved.

Approved (Rewarded)	Disapproved (Punished)
1. When I do my own work	cheat
Because _____	Because _____
2. When I treat others kindly	fight
Because _____	Because _____
3. When I help others	steal
Because _____	Because _____
4. When I care for my body	take illegal drugs
Because _____	Because _____
5. When I respect others	hate others
Because _____	Because _____
6. When I work hard	am lazy
Because _____	Because _____
7. When I protect the environment	pollute
Because _____	Because _____
8. When I am on time	am late
Because _____	Because _____
9. When I drive safely	speeding
Because _____	Because _____
10. When I think of others	am selfish
Because _____	Because _____

Justice

Instructions:

Other than the values based on pleasure or pain and reward or punishment, many say that one of the highest forms of moral behavior in our society is based on the concepts of justice. Ideas about fair play, equal rights, respect for every individual and respect for human life and dignity are all involved in the concept of justice.

Below you will find three lists containing an action, a value, and feelings which are related. Some items are based on the concept of justice and others on the ideas from the previous exercises. With a line, connect the items from the three lists which you think are related.

1. Actions	2. Values (Good & Bad)	3. Feelings that result
1. not cheating on exams •	• fairness	• shame
2. drinking •	• injustice	• love
3. playing sports •	• death	• anger
4. taking medicine •	• life	• happiness
5. taking illegal drugs •	• equality	• fear
6. sassing the teacher •	• poverty	• peace
7. following school rules •	• human dignity	• sadness
8. cheating on exams •	• order	• shame
9. studying hard •	• unkindness	• hope
10. throwing rocks •	• health	• jealousy
11. fighting •	• sickness	• anxiety
12. helping someone •	• respect for individuals	• remorse
13. stealing money •	• prejudice	• joy
14. making good grades •	• meaningless	• guilt
15. telling a story to someone •	• freedom	• satisfaction
16. keeping the environment clean •	• danger	• pain
17. being kind to someone •	• truth	• resentment
18. using curse words •	• anarchy	• hopelessness
19. helping someone who is sick •	• bondage	• pride
20. treating someone differently •	• disrespect	• envy
21. driving too fast •	• cruelty	
22. treating handicapped students nicely •	• meaningfulness	
	• rudeness	
23. caring for the poor •	• achievement	
24. developing talent •	• recognition	

VALUE JUDGEMENTS

Instructions:

Every day we are placed in situations where we must make some kind of value of judgement. By using the reasoning we have explored in the previous pages of this guide, we can now think what we should do in several situations which are described below. In other words, what value judgements must you make when considering what you should do in each of the following situations?

1. If a group of friends ask you to go for a car ride _____

_____

2. If a friend asks you to help him get elected to a school office _____

_____

3. If you are asked to go to a party _____

_____

4. If you are asked to help a friend with his homework _____

_____

5. If some friend disagrees with a school rule and wants to do something about it _____

_____

6. If all your friends are going out for a while tonight _____

_____

7. If you must vote in a school election _____

_____

8. If you find something in a local store you want very badly _____

_____

9. If someone not like you treats you with disrespect _____

WHAT TEN VALUES ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

AGREE OR DISAGREE

1. Each of us lives by a set of values.

2. Our values should be based on some sound reasons.

3. Most values in our democratic society are meant to protect us from harm and injustice and to promote peace and order in daily living.

5. Most of our rules and laws in America are based on moral concepts or values.

6. A person who changes his or her value system day in and day out is not well-adjusted.

7. When it is said of you that you are a good or moral person, that means that people think you live by a set of high values.

COACH